

My name is Gail Walker. I have worked in Massachusetts for 13 years. I am a registered nurse who has worked at Lawrence General Hospital as the director of maternal child health for almost 10 years.

We are very concerned about Cerberus - a New York venture capital firm - buying a hospital in our region.

Our region has a low cost, high access hospital whose staff has served the Greater Lawrence community with compassion for more than 135 years -- Lawrence General Hospital.

With more than 1,400 employees, and tens of thousands of patients who rely on Lawrence General, it is our hope that the Attorney General and Department of Public Health ensure that no health care access, available at Lawrence General is threatened due to this venture capital firm's purchase of Holy Family.

The services offered at Lawrence General Hospital are vital to our community.

In Lawrence, we have the only full service pediatric unit, and every Pediatric RN is certified in Pediatric Advanced Life Support

We have developed a pediatric hospitalist program with Floating Hospital for Children that will ensure 24-7 pediatric physician coverage in the fall at Lawrence General; the beauty of which means top-notch pediatric care for our children, without the need for families to travel into the city.

We have a highly experienced maternity, labor and delivery and Mother-Baby staff. The average tenure of our registered nurses who work in maternal child health is 25 years.

Our maternal child health service quality measures are excellent.

We have invested considerable resources and intense focus on our breastfeeding support program to ensure mothers are provided every opportunity for success in nursing their newborns.

Working with community partners for a Baby Café, a community based drop-in support center for new breastfeeding mothers, adds another dimension to our care & support for new parents.

To meet the needs of our Latina patients and families we are working with the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center GLFHC on a "Companeros" program which provide & educate support partners for Hispanic patients during labor & delivery.

Having worked in health care all of my life, and in this region for much of my career, I know how much we need every health care clinic, inpatient bed, physician and caregiver.

Access to affordable health care is so important – especially given the number of low income people who live in our region.

I believe that this acquisition may dramatically and permanently change health care delivery in our community. Having worked in a for-profit system it pained me to see how the focus changed from being the patients and community we served to being the bottom line.

Our region relies on two hospital providers, and many physicians and caregivers.

Our region needs every single health care access point we have and more.

I urge the Attorney General to put conditions in place on this transfer that preserve access and ensure that the programs like those that I have mentioned are not threatened.

Thank you.